



THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



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The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

January 2025

SJFD BADGE HISTORY

The San Jose Fire Department (SJFD) will be celebrating 171 years of official service to the citizens of San Jose. It all started on January 27th, 1854 when the Common Council of the City of San Jose officially recognized the SJFD and approved the organization of our first company "Hook & Ladder Co. No. One.

In 1869, a significant moment in the history of the SJFD was the introduction of an official badge that each fire company volunteer would wear on their uniform. Since that moment, for the next 156 years the SJFD has changed badge style 6 times.

The SJFM has tried for years to figure out the complete storyline of SJFD Badge styles used in historical sequence. It all came together back in July of 2024 when Renee Rockhold visited the SJFM at Old Fire Station One. Renee is the Grand Daughter In-Law of deceased Retired SJFD Battalion Chief Lawrence Campbell. We found out from Renee that Lawrence had a SJFD Badge Collection that he gifted to his three (3) Rockhold Great Grandsons back in 1990. The collection included notes from Lawrence detailing each badge he received in his career and historical reference information on all the badges in his collection. Lawrence noted important dates when each badge was adopted and allowed us to fill the gap on SJFD Badge History.

Take a look at the picture provided below that shows the six (6) badge styles now in our collection and note the changes that took place over time. One major discovery was that three (3) of the badge styles were similar in design, including the original SJFD Hook & Ladder Co. No. One being the basis of three (3) of the badge designs.

Historical Perspective: Fire Badges became part of the uniform in the early 19th century, when volunteer fire companies were becoming more common. The badge was used for identification at fire emergency scenes and to help prevent looting by unscrupulous citizens. Designs became unique with each volunteer department creating esprit de corps for unity & tradition. Key ideas that contributed to fire badge design was the use of the Maltese, trumpets, ladders, axes and the colors red, silver & gold.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT; FIRST BADGE FOR HOOK & LADDER Co. No. ONE IN SILVER, ADAPTED IN 1869. SECOND BADGE WAS SILVER PLATED OVER BRASS CALLED THE "WILLIAM TENANT BADGE" AND ADAPTED AROUND 1900. THE THIRD BADGE WAS CHROME PLATED OVER BRASS, ADAPTED IN 1921. FOURTH BADGE WAS CHROME PLATED OVER BRASS AND CALLED "FIREMAN", ADAPTED IN 1946. FIFTH BADGE WAS CHROME PLATED OVER BRASS AND CALLED "FIREFIGHTER" AND ADAPTED AROUND 1960. SIXTH AND CURRENT BADGE IS CHROME PLATED AND WAS ADAPTED AROUND 2004.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, WINTER 2025

By John A. McMillan



The San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) wishes everyone a Happy New Year and a start to new moments in each of our lives. The majority of you that receive this Newsletter have supported the SJFM in our efforts to restore and maintain our Historic Fire Collection and Old Fire Station One (OFS1). We are always so appreciative of your donation/volunteer efforts.

The SJFM begins 2025 with some high priorities recently approved by our Board of Directors. Below is a list of those priorities:

1. We are full speed ahead on design & construction of 4 new bathrooms in the old boiler room (including two (2) handicap bathrooms). Most construction will take place in January & February of 2025 with the hopes of 100% completion by April 1st, 2025.
2. The Board approved setting aside \$100,000 for development of new fire display ideas that tell the story of firefighting in San Jose with a focus on changing new technologies. We are in the early stages of development and welcome anyone interested in joining our team.
3. We are also setting aside about \$300,000 for the Program Design of OFS1. This effort will develop a set of completed construction documents that initially we can use to establish construction costs for finishing the complete restoration of OFS1 including safety and exit requirements (This will include elevator, new stairwell, sprinklers and seismic upgrades). This allows us to try and raise donation contributions as our next step to get the construction phase going.
4. Finish getting the 1945 American La France painted (Fire Engine 6). It just went into Maaco Painting for a custom paint job. Right now it is getting stripped and sanded to prepare for paint. After the paint job is complete then final touches to finish this project is next. We are almost there!

We had a great last quarter of 2024. We were officially open to the public every Tuesday and the first Saturday of the month from 10 am to 12 pm. It is free to visit OFS1. We provide docents for a tour and information about the SJFM. We are very lucky to have Maria Wardal as our main docent right now with backup help from Dave Wood, Jim Carter and John McMillan.

We also hosted a number of events at OFS1 including the Annual Bomberos Toys For Tots Drive-thru and drop off a toy at OFS1 in partnership with Rod and Wheelers, held on November 9th, 2024.

There was also a Preservation Action Council Meeting held on November 14th. Over 70 guests attended an evening event and had a great time!

The final event of 2024 was a Holiday Party for SJFD administration, held on December 19th for about 60 employees. This group had a grand time!

In closing, we look forward to 2025! We will consider expanding our hours of operation. We are also announcing a major Open House at OFS1 on April 26th with an all day celebration including pancake breakfast, tours of the SJFM, and fundraising activities. Keep an eye out for upcoming details.



LEFT TO RIGHT AND TOP TO BOTTOM: 1. ON NOVEMBER 9TH, THE BOMBEROS TOYS FOR TOTS DRIVE-THRU AND DROP OFF A TOY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ROD & WHEELERS AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE. 2. 1945 AMERICAN LAFRANCE (ENGINE 6) GETTING PREP WORK FOR PAINT BY MAACO AUTO BODY. 3. ON DECEMBER 19TH, THE SJFD FIRE ADMINISTRATION HELD THEIR ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE. WE DISCOVERED SANTA WAS ALSO IN ATTENDANCE NEXT TO OLD ENGINE ONE! 4. ON DECEMBER 10TH AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE, SAM SEIBERT MET WITH RENEE ROCKHOLD. THE LAST TIME THEY WERE TOGETHER WAS OVER TEN YEARS AGO. RENEE IS THE GRAND DAUGHTER IN-LAW OF DECEASED RETIRED BATTALION CHIEF LAWRENCE CAMPBELL (LAWRENCE IS ALSO SJFM HISTORIAN EMERITUS). 5. A PRESERVATION ACTION COUNCIL MEETING (PAC) WAS HELD ON NOVEMBER 14TH AT OLD FIRE STATION ONE WITH OVER 70 GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE.

WE NEED YOUR HELP MORE THAN EVER!

We appreciate all the volunteer support and donations to help the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) with it's current success. In over 20 years since the SJFM was created, we have completed some major projects at Old Fire Station One (OFS1) and the SJFM Warehouse.

First, in that timeframe we have received over 4.5 million dollars in donations. This has allowed us to purchase OFS1 in 2015 and proceed forward with some major repairs, asbestos & lead abatement, secure the roof, get the first floor completely remodeled & useable, complete downstairs handicap requirements and now add 4 new bathrooms on the first floor. In order to complete the remodel of OFS1 we estimate that there will be a need to find about 3 to 4 more million dollars in order to completely remodel OFS1 and make it a beautiful Historic Fire Museum in Downtown San Jose.

Also, in that timeframe many of you have volunteered to assist us with construction and other volunteer work at both building sites including restoring & maintaining apparatus and remodeling buildings. Some of you are now volunteering and being trained to be a docent at OFS1. Well we need more volunteer help now as we continue to grow. We will need more docents, apparatus repair & restoration volunteers and facility cleanup at both sites. Please give us a consideration. Remember OFS1 and the Historical Collection is yours too. The SJFM is just the caretaker.

Note: The SJFM has created a new position on our Board of Directors. It is called the Special Apparatus Operations Director. This person would coordinate all requests for use of our apparatus collection. This includes parades, firefighter memorial services, car shows, etc. This person would work with Vice President Jim Carter, and Director of the Fleet Scott Boucher. The SJFM had this position many years ago, then combined it with the Director of the Fleet. With a lot of restoration going on and more requests for apparatus use, we have decided to split the responsibilities and make each position more workable.

San Jose Fire Museum



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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Important Dates Coming Up!

On January 27th, 2025, the San Jose Fire Department will become 171 years old.

SAVE THE DATE!

Plan to attend San Jose Fire Museum Open House on April 26th at Old Fire Station One. More details will follow.

“The Museum Trumpet”

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